

Superior Region News

Team MDOT and You: Working together to move Michigan forward

Partnership:
*A relationship
between individuals
or groups that is
characterized by
mutual cooperation
and responsibility, as
for the achievement
of a specified goal*

Partnerships B a top priority

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is pleased to present this inaugural issue of the Superior Region News. This newsletter is intended to keep our transportation partners informed and involved as we work to provide Michigan residents and visitors with a multi-modal transportation system that is second to none. This newsletter will be distributed each May and November via the Internet and will highlight upcoming and completed projects, new techniques and technology, and other topics that affect the way we work. If you have suggestions or comments, forward them to Superior Region Communications Representative Dawn Garner at garnerda@michigan.gov.

Association Day attendees identify top three issues

This year's Association Day, held in Escanaba in early March, brought together industry representatives from MDOT, local contractors, and contractor associations. The group was asked to vote on the top three issues that they felt needed to be addressed prior to the upcoming construction season. Of the 30 in attendance, 16 said their top concerns were work-zone signage quality and cleanup. One of the topics discussed during the day-long meeting involved changes in requirements for work-zone signage. While the group felt it is the top issue, many commented that it is better than in the past. The second concern (14 votes) is soil erosion and sedimentation control (SESC). Many wanted more information as to DEQ and DOT requirements. Better education and training also were suggested to improve this area. The third issue, with 12 votes, involves traffic control signs and specifications. Recent changes in signing regulations continue to generate much discussion. (See following article)

New signage regulations

New legislation (P.A. 315), which went into effect April 8, defines the boundaries of Michigan's work zones. Beginning this spring, work zones will be marked with "Work Zone Begins" and "End Road Work" signs. "Begin Work Convoy" and "End Work Convoy" signs will be used for mobile crews traveling along roads as workers paint lane lines or patch potholes. The new law also requires posting a speed limit sign in all work zones which are marked with "Work Zone Begins" and "End Road Work" signs.

The legislation also lowers the threshold at which driving offenses can trigger *Andy's Law* penalties. Andy's Law penalties include up to 15 years in prison and \$7,500 in fines for driving in a criminal manner – such as reckless or drunken driving – and killing a construction or maintenance worker; and up to one year in jail and \$2,500 in fines for injuring a worker.

P.A. 315 will include penalties for lesser driving offenses such as careless driving or speeding. MDOT reminds drivers that the default speed limit is 45 mph in a clearly defined work zone with a lane closure, unless posted otherwise.



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"This bill is about protecting road workers, but it's also about slowing everyone down for their own protection," said State Transportation Director Gloria J. Jeff. "Most motorists don't realize that statistically they are more at risk than the workers are in work zones. But, the point is, we want everyone to slow down for safety. This new law will clearly mark the beginning and end of work zones while informing the motorist what the speed limit is 'in the zone.'"

Affected work zones will include state highways, county roads and city streets. A work zone may involve construction, maintenance or utility work activities. Signs will be placed on projects currently under way. Motorists can expect to see the new signs as construction begins this spring.

2004 construction highlights

The Michigan Department of Transportation will be investing \$60 million on U.P. trunklines and bridges this construction season. Listed here are a few of the region's high impact projects.

Crystal Falls TSC - Engineers from the Crystal Falls TSC have three major projects on US-2 this year. Pierce Street to Great Lakes Road will be resurfaced from June through September. Traffic through that 4.5-mile stretch will be controlled by traffic regulators. Painting and resurfacing will be done on the Cisco and Middle Branch bridges June through October. Temporary traffic signals will control traffic. Another 11.5 miles of US-2 will be resurfaced from Old US-2 to the south branch of the Paint River from June through August. Traffic regulators will help maintain traffic.

Escanaba TSC - Two major bridge projects will take place in the Escanaba TSC area this year. In October, work will begin on the replacement of the Menominee River Bridge.

This year-long project will require a short traffic detour. Construction is being done by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, with both states funding the project. Traffic also will be detoured in Manistique from May through October while the Manistique River Bridge is reconstructed.

Ishpeming TSC - Houghton County will be seeing a number of improvements during the 2004 construction season. The south approach of the Portage Lift Bridge will be reconstructed and a lane added on US-41/M-26. Traffic will be detoured for a short time during this project. A few miles north of the bridge, a southbound lane will be added along US-41 on Quincy Hill. The area will also be resurfaced. Lane shifts and traffic regulators will control traffic. And, a little further north, 5.5 miles of US-41 will be resurfaced from Calumet, north to the Keweenaw County line.

Newberry TSC - Much of the work out of the Newberry TSC will focus on improving the ride on I-75. Resurfacing will take place from Portage Road, in St. Ignace, north to M-134. This will be done in two phases with phase one, from Portage Street to M-123, being completed by early July, and phase two, from M-123 to M-134, being completed by mid-October. There will be lane closures on both projects and the speed limit will be reduced to 60 mph. All ramps will remain open.



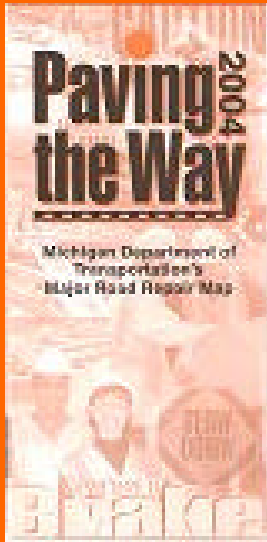
Although bridge reconstruction can greatly impact motorists, the Paint River Bridge in Iron County, completed in 2002, proves that it is worth the wait.

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Permits required for work in right of way

If you plan on doing any work in the right of way this construction season, remember you need a permit. Michigan State laws require the Michigan Department of Transportation to issue permits for any operations within the highway right of way, other than normal vehicular or pedestrian travel.

"If you're in the right of way, anything more than putting up a mailbox needs a permit," said Newberry TSC Permits Coordinator Lou Oberle. "When in doubt, you should check with your local TSC and get a permit form."

Permit form 2205, "Individual Application and Permit," is used for all routine requests involving construction and/or occupying state trunkline for work on driveways, tree trimming, drainage, landscaping, grading, utilities, and other uses. Permit forms are available electronically at <http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/webforms/index.cfm> or by contacting your local TSC.

Access management on US-41 corridor

A three-year partnership between the Michigan Department of Transportation and local transportation stakeholders has led to the creation of a draft plan to help manage access points along the US-41/M-28 corridor in Marquette County.

"Our corridor management group has been working on ways to improve and preserve the US-41 corridor," said Ishpeming TSC Manager Andy Sikkema. The group consists of MDOT representatives, city and township officials, local police agencies and business organizations.

These stakeholders identified areas for potential improvement, which then were included in the draft plan recently presented by Mark Wykoff, Planning and Zoning Center, Inc., Lansing. "This is a great way for communities to look down the road at their long-term needs and begin planning to ensure the transportation system is capable of keeping up with demands," Wykoff said.

The process is ongoing. The comments collected at two recent public meetings will be incorporated into the plan and then reviewed by the management group.

Construction maps available at TSCs

Each MDOT Transportation Service Center has received a supply of the 2004 Michigan Construction maps. These maps list the high-impact projects around the state including construction completion dates and any delays motorists can expect. Be sure to pick one up before you head out to travel Michigan this summer. Also, if you have a meeting or location where you would like some maps for distribution, contact your local TSC. State construction maps can also be downloaded from the MDOT Web site at www.michigan.gov/mdot. The online version is updated regularly. Free Michigan State highway maps are also available.